

Accountability Report 2014–2015

Service Nova Scotia ◀





Service Nova Scotia

Annual Accountability Report for the Fiscal Year 2014-15

July 20, 2015

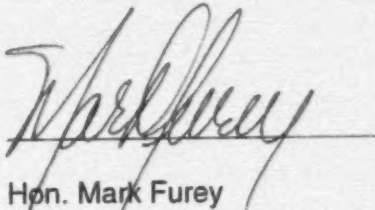
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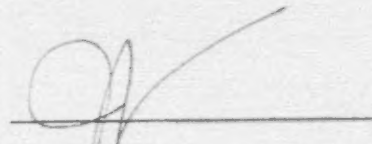
Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Office of Service Nova Scotia for the year ended March 31, 2015 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the "Office's" Statement of Mandate for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the "Office's" outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Office management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Service Nova Scotia management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Service Nova Scotia and Department of Municipal Affairs 2014-2015 Statement of Mandate.



Hon. Mark Furey
Minister



Joanne Munro
CEO

Message from the Minister and CEO

We are pleased to present the Accountability Report for Service Nova Scotia (SNS) for April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015. This report highlights last year's progress in meeting the priorities of the Government of Nova Scotia as well as the department's own Statement of Mandate.

SNS is a client-facing office with a mandate to provide higher levels of service to Nova Scotians, while working to reduce red tape and modernize legislation. The Office recently reorganized into two branches – the Client Experience Branch with a focus on service excellence and modernizing all aspects of the client experience and the Program Modernization Branch which focuses on red tape reduction and modernizing legislation.

Much of the Office's work focuses on improving access to government programs and services across the province. Making it easier for Nova Scotians to interact with government continues to be our priority. The Office works to provide quality services, to streamline the delivery of public information, and to ensure the integrity and security of all the information it collects and holds.

Notable achievements during 2014-15 include:

- Creation of new office and structure – on April 1 2014, SNS was established as a separate Office of government with a mandate to deliver higher levels of service and reduce red tape. Since the establishment of the office a new CEO was recruited and the Office was substantially restructured to enable it to deliver on its mandate;
- Legislative and regulatory reform – SNS introduced legislative and regulatory changes aimed at enhancing consumer protection, reducing red tape and making it easier to do business. These reforms included: Direct Sellers Legislation, sale of insurance at funeral homes, repeal of the Wireless Code, sale of growlers by microbreweries and u-Vint and u-Brew regulations;
- Nova Scotia online – SNS continues to advance the transformation of government service delivery to Nova Scotians via the Government's online service. Activities included: significant improvements to the usability of the online service; development of the Restaurant and Accommodation industry sector service bundle; and the initiation of a project with the NS Office of Immigration to leverage the online service to enable the NS Nominee program;
- Tripling the revenue from fines to municipalities recovered through our consolidated collection program;
- Continuing to combat the growth of contraband tobacco sales through joint investigations with RCMP Federal Policing, local RCMP detachments;
- Community outreach – SNS completed cross-jurisdictional research and consultation with stakeholder groups including the transgender community for the introduction of amendments to the *Vital Statistics Act*. This change eliminated

transgender surgery as a requirement for having one's sex designation changed on their birth registration and establishing a new less onerous process.

All of these achievements have been made possible because we have a dedicated and committed staff who work diligently to make sure programs and services are responsive to the needs of Nova Scotians.

Financial Results

<i>Office of Service Nova Scotia</i>		
	<i>2014-2015 Estimate</i>	<i>2014-2015 Actual</i>
<i>Program and Service Area</i>	<i>(\$thousands)</i>	<i>(\$thousands)</i>
<i>CEO Chief Executive Office:</i>	217	399
<i>Client Experience</i>	40,339	38,659
<i>Strategy and Corporate Services</i>	29,311	28,385
<i>Program Modernization</i>	32,235	29,462
<i>Total Program Expenses</i>	102,102	96,905
<i>TCA Purchase Requirements</i>	8,882	3,504
<i>Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)</i>	873	808

VARIANCE EXPLANATIONS

Total Program Expenses

Service Nova Scotia expenditures were \$5.2 million (5.1%) under budget due to underspending in the Heating Assistance Rebate Program of \$1.6 million, and general operating and salary savings of \$3.6 million.

The reorganization of Service Nova Scotia resulted in additional expenses that had not been included in the budget such as the creation of an Associate Deputy Minister position, as well as the addition of communications and administrative support. This resulted in an additional expenditure of \$182k in the Chief Executive Office which was funded through vacancy and operational savings.

TCA Expenditure Analysis

TCA expenditures were lower than planned by \$5.4 million due to delays in A2B and A4C projects.

Funded Staff

Delays in filling vacancies account for lower than expected (65) FTE's.

Significant Events and Accomplishments in 2014-15

As of April 1, 2014, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR) became two entities – the new Department of Municipal Affairs and a new Office, called Service Nova Scotia (SNS). Minister Furey continues to be responsible for both SNS and the Department of Municipal Affairs. SNS's mandate is to provide better quality service to Nova Scotians and to focus on cutting red tape for businesses.

The Statement of Mandate document that serves as the basis of this Accountability Report was developed to reflect the structure of the Department as of March 31, 2014. Outcomes, measures and priorities were crafted as though there was no change to the Department by creation of the two new organizations. The Statement of Mandate identified that some of the functions would be delivered by Municipal Affairs, and some by SNS. There continues to be close collaboration between SNS and the new Department of Municipal Affairs. This Accountability Report derived from that Statement of Mandate has been revised to reflect the new organizational structure and reports only on the results for SNS. In addition, in October of 2014, the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) migrated from SNS to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Results for RMV are reflected in their Accountability Report.

Strategic Framework

MISSION

Service Nova Scotia delivers services to citizens and businesses and administers a diverse range of programs for the public good.

VISION

We are a client-focused organization that makes a valued difference in the lives of Nova Scotians.

AIMS

- 1. To achieve the highest quality program outcomes**
- 2. To make it simple for citizens and businesses to interact with government**
- 3. To make SNS a great place to work**
- 4. To continuously improve the efficiency of programs and services**

Initiatives Supporting Government's Priorities

The 2014-15 Statement of Mandate identified key initiatives that would support the identified Government priorities.

To support the Government priority of "**Accessible, responsive healthcare**" SNS pursued a number of activities meant to have an impact on the number of people accessing the healthcare system.

- Worked to ensure the safe consumption of alcohol by maintaining a risk-based inspection system, in compliance with the *Liquor Control Act*.
- Focused on stopping the sale and distribution of illegal tobacco, in conjunction with our partners in law enforcement. Illegal tobacco in Nova Scotia continues to be a concern as evidenced by the quantity and number of seizures. These efforts to reduce illegal tobacco consumption will reduce long term health care costs.

To address the Government priority of "**Prosperous businesses of all sizes - creating jobs across the province**" SNS continues to transform how government services are offered to Nova Scotians by expanding and improving online service for our Business and Consumer clients. By partnering with other provincial departments, programs and agencies as well as municipalities, the Office has grown the online service offerings through:

- Continued development of more application and renewal forms online, document attachment functionality, and end-to-end integration of the NS Online service (Access to Business) with government's back-end licensing database system to enable automatic data entry when forms are being prepared by the user.
- Partnered with Nova Scotia Environment (NSE) to support their System for Notification and Approval Processing (SNAP) project. The SNAP project will leverage the NS Online service to enable businesses and individuals to submit information electronically to NSE.
- Improved access for business clients to interact with the online service. Completed technical, privacy and legal analysis to support the implementation of an analytics tool that will support evidence based decision-making related to on-going system improvements.
- Partnered with Department of Natural Resources (Land Services) to develop a dynamic electronic form for clients replacing the paper Crown Land Application form. The paper multi-purpose form required clients to review the whole form but only fill in the parts specific to their request. The electronic version displays only the necessary information fields making the process simpler to understand and more efficient for the client.

- Developed a Business Welcome letter that will be automatically be sent to all new entrepreneurs who register a business through the NS Online service. This letter provides a comprehensive list of information on a variety of regulatory and compliance requirements needed to successfully open for business.

Additionally, the digital services group engaged small and medium-sized businesses in Nova Scotia to ensure that the development of online service options continued to meet their changing needs and are accessible to all business clients. This was done by:

- Engaging stakeholders to inform work on Nova Scotia's online services for business and individuals. Members of the business community were engaged in usability testing providing feedback on the proposed changes to the site design and functionality to understand their "pain points" with government interactions and improve the user experience.
- Initiating an Industry Advisory Group and a collaborative, cross-departmental Industry Sector Bundle working group to support the design and development of the Restaurant and Accommodations Industry Sector Bundle. One of the first of its kind across Canada, it represents the first time a 'bundle' of services focused on an industry sector will be delivered online, in a one-stop-shop, accessible to clients at the client's convenience.
- Analysis had been completed to identify the next industries of focus, with convenience stores selected as a top candidate.

The Alcohol, Gaming, Fuel and Tobacco Division (AGFT) worked with the Department of Finance to ensure that u-Vint and u-Brew operations can be licensed and regulated.

- Introduced Act changes giving authority to license in late 2014 and the regulations required to license and regulate in 2015.
- Developed the processes associated with licensing and regulating, potential licensees had to be educated on the new processes and then AGFT had to work with the operators for submission of license applications.

To address the Government priority **"Helping all Nova Scotians meet their fullest potential by supporting vulnerable communities – seniors, disabled"** SNS was active in the following areas:

- Ensured continued consumer protection under the *Consumer Protection Act*, through Payday Loans Regulations and regular lender inspections.
 - As a key member of the Consumer Measures Committee's Payday and Other High Cost Loans Working Group Worked, SNS worked on harmonizing data collection and making consumer and financial literacy information available across Canada.
 - Intervened at the Utility and Review Board's Hearing on Payday Loans, which took place in February 2015.

- Streamlined regulation by removing Nova Scotia cell phone rules from the *Consumer Protection Act* with an effective date of June 3, 2015.
 - Wireless consumer protection is now under the purview of Federal regulations.
 - The requirement for wireless companies to provide customers information on responsible cell phone use has been added to the *Safer Communities and Neighborhoods Act*. This assists the Department of Justice in their cyber safety initiatives.
- Implemented reforms governing collection and debt management companies to provide better protection for citizens particularly in the area of debt settlement activities.
 - Worked with other Canadian jurisdictions on debt management issues. Currently await regulatory decisions in Ontario and elsewhere. Changes will be made to promote alignment across provinces and reduce red tape for businesses.
- Recommended changes to the *Condominium Act* to address operational issues and enhance consumer protection.
 - Continued analysis on input from the multi-stakeholder review for amendments to the *Condominium Act* and associated regulations, aimed at enhancing consumer protection and simplifying governance of over 400 condominium corporations in Nova Scotia.
- Administered heating and energy assistance rebate programs in an efficient and timely manner.
 - Implemented process efficiencies to the Heating Assistance Rebate Program that led to improved disbursement of funds and administrative cost savings of over \$40,000.
 - Simplified application forms, which reduced the number of applications that require follow-up by 50%.
- Recommended changes to the *Direct Sellers Regulation Act* to strengthen enforcement provisions in response to marketplace concerns.
 - Amendments to the *Direct Sellers' Regulation Act* received Royal Assent in May of 2014 with regulations to support proclamation of the amendments currently under development. These amendments increased consumer protection by enhancing the penalties for non-compliance with the Act. They also addressed stakeholder concerns by eliminating permits for individual direct sellers.

To address the Government priority "**Responsible Fiscal Management**" SNS continued to expand its Corporate Collection Program.

- Assisted all client departments, programs, governmental units and the MUSH (municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals) sector by working with their

clients to customize payment plans so that they can meet their obligations in a reasonable manner.

- Added 6 new municipalities and a university (the first) to our list of clients.

Initiatives Supporting Service Nova Scotia Aims

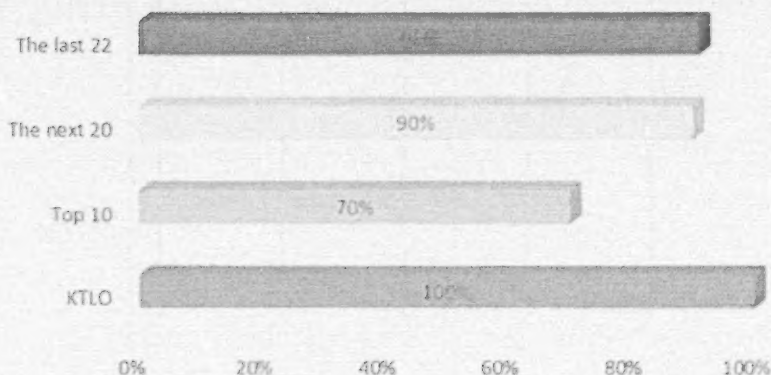
In addition to pursuing initiatives that support the Government priorities, SNS also worked to make a valued difference in the lives of Nova Scotians through our four organizational aims.

- To achieve the highest quality program outcomes
- To make it simpler for citizen's, businesses and municipalities to interact with government
- To make SNS a great place to work
- To continuously improve the efficiency of programs and services

To achieve the highest quality program outcomes SNS:

- Undertook foundational work to support a comprehensive Consumer & Marketplace Strategy. This work will continue to support the strategic priorities of the Business and Consumer Services Unit.
 - The @NSConsumers twitter handle continues to provide education and awareness on consumer protection issues in Nova Scotia. Handle highlights in 2014-15 included: the addition of 183 new followers, led two Twitter Forums on Residential Tenancies, and participated in a number of fraud related twitter forums.
- SNS continues to evolve the Enterprise Project and Portfolio Management capabilities.
 - At the end of 2014 100% of the "Keep The Lights On" (KTLO) were being worked. 70% of our Top 10 projects were being worked on, with 2 awaiting capital funding and 1 requiring resources. In addition 90% of the "next 20" were being worked as well.
 - The goal remains to ensure that the highest priority projects are being completed and the expected outcomes are achieved.

EPPM at end of 2014



- Continued improvement in policy, revised procedures, and document processes to enable SNS to meet its mandate. Modified the management oversight model and continued to evolve risk management and business process management training.
 - Amendments to streamline the process of appointing Registrars and Deputy Registrars under a number of Acts within consumer protection area were proclaimed in January. The previous appointment process limited the effectiveness and SNS's ability to respond in today's dynamic marketplace.
- Updated and improved the regulatory functioning of the *Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act* and the *Cemetery and Funeral Services Act*.
 - Amended the *Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act* to permit the regulation of apprentice funeral directors. The amendments addressed educational, apprenticeship and licensing requirements.

Introduced legislative amendments for the sale of funeral insurance within funeral homes.

To make it simple for citizens, businesses and municipalities to interact with government SNS:

- Expanded and improved online services for citizens.
 - Partnered with Nova Scotia Office of Immigration to design the first online service for individuals that will leverage the NS Online infrastructure and enable the NS Nominee program. This service, planned for release in winter 2015, will mark the transformation of the existing business-centric solution to a single service for Nova Scotians, and those interested to interact with the Nova Scotia Government online.

- In partnership with Departments of Natural Resources (DNR) and Fisheries and Aquaculture (DFA), completed preliminary work to implement an online self-serve solution that will enable hunters and anglers, and private licence vendors to complete licence sales electronically.
- Replaced the Nova Scotia Indian Fuel Tax Exemption (NSIFTE) system to allow for real-time transaction processing and enhanced data security and privacy.
 - Over 6,700 clients now obtain their eligibility for exempt fuel faster.
 - Both the retailers' and clients' transactions and data are better protected using high level security protocols.
- Improved vehicle titling and permitting services by working with the Automobile Dealer Services Improvement Working Group to provide online service.
 - In collaboration with the Dealer Service Improvement Working Group, the requirements and design of a new online dealer service has been finalized. Implementation will occur in 2015/16.
- Geographic Information Services engaged several government business areas to make geospatial / mapping information available publically on the Internet.
 - A focus during 2014/15 was the work with several groups at the Department of Natural Resources including Crown Lands, Forestry, Geoscience, Forest Protection, and Wildlife.
 - An important aspect of this collaboration was to define the processes, procedures, and standards to be used for contributing geospatial data to a single provincial repository.

To make SNS a great place to work our actions included:

- Analysis of the 2013 Employee Engagement Survey and sought additional feedback from employees to develop an Employee Engagement Strategy.
 - Action items were developed and delivered throughout the year in efforts to improve employee engagement. Action items included mandatory performance management, creating opportunities to innovate in the workplace and improving communication to staff.
- Continued to develop and implement a Healthy Workplace Program with the aim of supporting a healthy and safe culture. Responded to employee needs by promoting healthy attitudes and maintaining a productive workplace environment.
 - The SNS & DMA Fitness Society continued to administer discounted fitness memberships for all Provincial Government employees in Nova Scotia.

To continuously improve the efficiency of programs and services SNS:

- Broadened citizen and business online services through Online Services work to streamline access to government services for all Nova Scotians.

- Expanded the use of the Business Number as a unique identifier for business within the business community.
- More than 28,000 unique businesses have signed up to use NS Online Service (A2B and A4C) and this number continues to grow.
- Over 130 licences, permits, applications, renewals and certificates can be accessed via the Online Service for Business
- Expanded the validation of death information with other government departments.
 - The application will soon provide broadened access to death validation.
 - Development of the Life Event Bundling interdepartmental data sharing (i.e. death information) initiative is complete with testing scheduled for late 2015.
- Relocated a portion of the Contact Centre from Maritime Centre to Dartmouth.
 - Created much needed space in Maritime Centre to achieve synergies and efficiencies as complementary groups are now collocated.
 - Enabled SNS's Business Continuity Plan. SNS has the capability to answer public enquiries on either side of the harbour, this functionality is tested daily to ensure our readiness in times of crisis.
- Geographic Information Services continued to modernize the Nova Scotia Coordinate Referencing System by expanding the provincial network of GPS-enabled survey monuments with the addition 9 new monuments.
 - This included eight on Cape Breton Island and one on Sable Island.
 - This work is ongoing and province-wide implementation is expected by 2017.

In addition:

The Accountability Report reports on SNS's efforts to meet the initiatives laid out in the previous year's Statement of Mandate. Occasionally significant work is undertaken to accomplish things not identified in the Statement of Mandate. In 2014-15, effort was spent addressing the topic of Change of Gender on the birth registration.

- Vital Statistics staff conducted research with our counterparts across the country and worked with the Uniform Law Conference of Canada as part of a broader effort to develop a new model Vital Statistics Law for use in Canada.
- Consultation was conducted with various parties including Doctors NS, Association of Social Workers, College of Registered Nurses, Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project, The Youth Project, OutLaw (Dalhousie LGBTQ) NS Human Right Commission and others.
- The outcome was amendments to the *Vital Statistics Act* and *Change of Name Act* for Change of Sex on Birth Certificate which was introduced and passed in the legislature during the Spring 2015 session.

Changes to the SNSMR 2014-15 Performance Measures from the Statement of Mandate

Service Nova Scotia made changes to the 2014-15 Statement of Mandate to reflect the creation of the two entities. The measure related to "Development of Viable Local Government" was removed as it related specifically to the Department of Municipal Affairs. Results for this measure should be reflected in their Accountability Report.

Reflecting this change the 2014-15 Statement of Mandate for Service Nova Scotia would now have three performance measures that are strategic in nature:

1. **Make SNS a great place to work:** For 2014-15 SNSMR will measure % completion of the activities for the Employee Engagement Strategy. The target is to Make SNS a Top 3 Department in Employee Engagement by 2015.
2. **To continuously improve the efficiency of Programs and Services: Effective Collection of Government Debts and Distribution of Financial Benefits:** Targeting a 45% increase in realized revenues returned to program areas through Collection Services
3. **Make it simple for citizens, businesses and municipalities to interact with Government:** Through an increased uptake in online services of 10% by 2015-16

Performance Measures

TO MAKE SNS A GREAT PLACE TO WORK					
OUTCOME	MEASURE / RATIONALE	DATA Base Year	TARGET 2015-16	TRENDS	Strategic Actions to achieve target
Objective: To Make SNSMR a Top 3 Department in Employee Engagement by 2015					
Outcome Employees feel committed to the Department and our AIMS	Measure For 2014-15 SNSMR will measure % completion of the activities for the Employee Engagement Strategy	Base Year: 2009-10 75	Annual Target: 2014 – 15 – 85% of engagement activities are complete Ultimate Target 2016-17 – Be top 3 (large department) – Improving EEI by 5%	Previous Year data Subsequent year data: 2009-10 - 75 2011-12 - 67 2013-14 - 69 NS Government numbers for the same period. 2009-10 – 74 2011-12 – 62 2013-14 – 60	Strategic Actions Development of an Employee Engagement Strategy Continued focus on OH&S and Wellness Created opportunities to innovate in the workplace Provided organizational information to staff
	In 2016-17 this measure will migrate to the Employee Engagement Index which is presently measured every 2 years.				
This measure will change as the Government moves to consistent measure for Employee Engagement in similar sized departments.					

Performance Measures

TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES															
OUTCOME	MEASURE / RATIONALE	DATA Base Year	TARGET	TRENDS	Strategic Actions to achieve target										
Objective: Effective Collection of Government Debts and Distribution of Financial Benefits															
Outcomes	Measure	Base Year:	Annual Target:	Previous year data:	Strategic Actions										
Consolidated centralized collection group ensures debts owing across government are collected	Increase in monies returned to program areas through Collection Services	2010-2011	2014-15: \$22,828,000	2011-12: \$19,244,307, 13.3% increase YoY	The strong performance came from: - Improvement in our processes - Focus on efficiencies - Increased client programs with 6 municipalities and 1 university brought onboard. (This is a significant advancement as it is the first university.)										
		\$16,979,043	2015-16: \$23,512,840	2012-13: \$21,449,720, 11.5% increase YoY, 2013-14: \$22,700,231											
More money returned to program areas across Government and the MUSH sector		<u>Ultimate Target</u> 45% increase over base year (2010-11) in realized revenue by 2015-16		5.8% increase YoY Cumulative 33.7% increase in realized revenue from 2010-11 to 2013-14											
 <table><caption>Realized Revenue Data</caption><thead><tr><th>Year</th><th>Revenue (\$)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2010-11</td><td>16,979,043</td></tr><tr><td>2011-12</td><td>19,244,307</td></tr><tr><td>2012-13</td><td>21,449,720</td></tr><tr><td>2013-14</td><td>22,700,231</td></tr></tbody></table>						Year	Revenue (\$)	2010-11	16,979,043	2011-12	19,244,307	2012-13	21,449,720	2013-14	22,700,231
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Performance Measures

MAKE IT SIMPLE FOR CITIZENS, BUSINESSES AND MUNICIPALITIES TO INTERACT WITH GOVERNMENT					
OUTCOME	MEASURE / RATIONALE	DATA Base Year	TARGET	TRENDS	Strategic Actions to achieve target
OBJECTIVE: Deliver the majority of interactions online by 2015-16					
Outcome Effective delivery of services to business and citizens Citizens and Business are able to use online self-service options to manage their interactions with government	Measure Increased uptake in online services* 	Base Year: 2011-12 608,055	Annual Target: Increase uptake on online transactions by 10% by 2015-2016 2015-16: 668,860	Previous year data: 2012-13: 632,328 2013-14: 656,067 2014-15: 784, 433	Strategic Actions Finalized Industry Sector Bundle for spring release Improved user experience Increased the scope of services offered by online services Undertook identity and Access Management work Initiated requirements and design for new employer abstract service Finalized requirements and design for new online dealer service Added new and additional offerings online
	Increase Online transaction offerings	2012-13 3	2015-16 3 2016-17 3	2014-15: • 3 new forms offered online	

Appendix A

Annual Report under Section 18 of the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*

The Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labor Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment, or
- d) directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing

The following is a summary of disclosures received by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2014-2015
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A

There were no Disclosures of Wrongdoing received by Service Nova Scotia in 2014-15.